In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

Speech is a great blessing of Allah. Through the use of his tongue, a person can either build up a treasure of good deeds for his Hereafter or be ruined by it. The Prophet (SAW) held his tongue and advised Muadh (RAA):

"Keep this in control." He (Muadh) said: *"Shall we be called to account in respect of that which we say?"* He (SAW) answered: *"May your mother lose you, will people not be thrown face down into Hell only on account of the harvest of their tongue?"* **(Tirmidhi)**

On some other occasions, He (SAW) said:

"A Muslim is he from whose hand and tongue the Muslims are safe." **(Muslim)**

"Whoever can guarantee (the chastity of) what is between his two jaw-bones and what is between his two legs (i.e. his tongue and his private parts), I guarantee Paradise for him." **(Bukhari)**

"A slave (of Allah) may utter a word (carelessly) which displeases Allah without thinking of its gravity and because of that he will be thrown into the Hell-Fire." **(Bukhari)**

"When a man gets up in the morning, all the limbs humble themselves before the tongue and say, 'Fear Allah for our sake, for we are dependent on you; if you are straight we are straight, but if you are crooked we are crooked." **(Tirmidhi)**

"When I was taken up to heaven I passed by people who had nails of copper and were scratching their faces and their breasts. I said: 'Who are these people, Gabriel?' He replied: 'They are those who were given to back biting and who aspersed people's honour."
(Abu Dawood)

Some of the Sins related to the Tongue are given below:

Lying

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Truthfulness leads to righteousness, and righteousness leads to Paradise. And a man keeps on telling the truth until he becomes a truthful person. Falsehood leads to Al-Fajur (evil-doing), and Al-Fajur leads to the (Hell) Fire, and a man may keep on telling lies till he is written before Allah, a liar." **(Bukhari)**

"When a man lies, the angel moves a mile from him because of the bad odour of what he has produced." **(Tirmidhi)**

Through a dream, the Prophet (SAW) was shown the realm of the Unseen. He said: *"Last night two persons came to me (in a dream) and woke me up and said to me, 'Proceed!' I set out with them. So we proceeded and came to a man lying flat on his back and another man standing over his head with an iron hook, and behold, he would put the hook in one side of the man's mouth and tear off that side of his face to the back (of the neck) and similarly tear his*

nose from front to back and his eye from front to back. Then he turned to the other side of the man's face and did just as he had done with the other side. He hardly completed this side when the other side returned to its normal state. Then he returned to it to repeat what he had done before." He (SAW) was told: *"As for the man you came upon whose sides of mouth, nostrils and eyes were torn off from front to back, he is the symbol of the man who goes out of his house in the morning and tells so many lies that it spreads all over the world."* **(Bukhari)**

The Prophet (SAW) has told us that lying is one of the four signs of a hypocrite. **(Bukhari)**

The Prophet (SAW) also said:

"Woe to him who tells things, speaking falsely, to make people laugh thereby. Woe to him! Woe to him!" **(Abu Dawood)**

Sometimes, mothers lie to their children to pacify them or stop them from being naughty and do not even consider it as lying. This is wrong, and in fact there is a hadith, the meaning of which is that if a mother promises to give her child something and then does not give him anything, a lie is recorded against her.

(Abu Dawood)

Regarding false testimony, there is a hadith that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"False witness has been made equivalent to attributing a partner to Allah." **(Abu Dawood)**

Although lying, in principle, is forbidden, in some cases it is permitted. The Prophet (SAW) said:

"He who makes peace between the people by inventing good information or saying good things, is not a liar." **(Bukhari)**

Lying is also permissible in certain extenuating circumstances. For example, if one has given refuge to a person whose life and property is in danger from a tyrant and one is asked about the person's whereabouts, it is permissable to lie in order to protect him. However, one must be careful not to lie outright, but to answer in such a manner that the person asking the question misunderstands the answer. If there is no choice but to lie, then lying in this situation is not prohibited, but it must be clearly understood that a lie does not become the truth and so one hopes that Allah will make an allowance for the circumstances and forgive the person.

Backbiting

Allah tells us:

"O you who believe! Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: And spy not on each other behind their backs. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Nay, you would abhor it...But fear Allah. For Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful." **(Quran 49:12)**

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Do you know what is backbiting? Backbiting implies your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. If (that failing) what you assert is actually found (in him), you in fact backbited him, and if that is not in him, it is a slander." **(Muslim)**

Sincerity to a Muslim brother demands that his faults and shortcomings not be mentioned to anyone, but that he should be admonished in private. According to the Prophet (SAW):

"Part of the expiation for slander is that you should ask the one that you have slandered to forgive you saying: 'O Allah, forgive us and him." **(Mishkat)**

If you hear someone backbiting, forbid him to do so because the Prophet (SAW) said:

"He who defends the honour of a brother, Allah will shield his face against the Fire on the Day of Judgement. **(Tirmidhi)**

And if he does not heed your advice, then you should part company with him.

The Prophet also said: *"When one of you dies, speak no ill of him."*

(Tirmidhi)

In some cases talking negatively about a person in his absence is allowed; for example, if someone seeks an opinion about him before finalising a marriage, business or other important matter with him, it is obligatory that you should not hide the facts. It is also permissible for an oppressed person to speak against the oppressor or when a father has to be told about his son's wrong conduct, but the purpose of this should be to reform rather than to backbite.

Taunting

The Arabic word 'ta'an' used for taunting means to poke with a spear and when someone taunts the other, it hurts in the same way. The difference between taunting and backbiting is that one is done in the presence of the person and the other is done in his absence, where he is not able to defend himself. Allah tells us:

"O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): Nor let some women laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other nor call each other by (offensive) nicknames: ill-seeming is a name connoting wickedness (to be used of one) after he has believed: And those who do not desist are (Indeed) doing wrong." **(Quran 49:11)**

To make fun of someone's looks, appearance, lineage or lack of finances is a very mean thing to do because it was not of their own choosing. Abu Dharr (RAA) narrated that: *"There was a quarrel between me and another man whose mother was a non-Arab and I called her bad names. The man mentioned (complained about) me to the Prophet. The Prophet said, "You still have the traits of (the Pre-Islamic period of) ignorance."* **(Bukhari)**

Wailing & Lamenting

One of the common uses of the tongue is to lament and mourn over the dead.

Losing a loved one is indeed a source of great sorrow and as being grief-stricken and crying is a natural reaction, it is not forbidden. Even the Prophet (SAW) cried at the death of his loved ones, but at the same time, he gave instructions that one should not say anything that displeases Allah.

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"If the wailing woman does not repent before she dies, she will be made to stand on the Day of Resurrection wearing a garment of pitch and a chemise of mange." **(Muslim)**

To wail and lament loudly at someone's death is against the demands of sabr (patience). This is why he (SAW) said:

"Will you listen? Allah does not punish for shedding tears, nor for the grief of the heart but He punishes or bestows His Mercy because of this." He pointed to his tongue. **(Bukhari)**

The Prophet (SAW) also said:

"He who slaps his cheeks, tears his clothes and follows the ways and traditions of the Days of Ignorance is not one of us." **(Bukhari)**

Harsh Speech

Sometimes when things don't go the way they want them to, people go home in a bad mood and give vent to their anger, not caring who they hurt. The Prophet (SAW) has expressed extreme disapproval for such behavior and said:

"The worst people in Allah's sight on the Day of Resurrection will be those whom the people leave to be away from their evil (deeds)." **(Bukhari)**

Spreading Rumours

The Prophet (SAW) said: *"It is enough falsehood for a man to relate everything he hears."* **(Abu Dawood)**

Abusing

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Abusing a Muslim is Fisq (an evil doing) and killing him is Kufr (disbelief)." **(Bukhari)**

"If somebody accuses another of Fisq (by calling him 'Fasiq' i.e. a wicked person) or accuses him of Kufr, such an accusation will revert to him (i.e. the accuser) if his companion (the accused) is innocent." **(Bukhari)**

"When two men revile one another, what they say is laid to the charge of the one who began it, so long as the one who is wronged does not go over the score." **(Muslim)**

Slander

Allah tells us:

"And those who annoy believing men and women undeservedly bear (on themselves) a calumny and a glaring sin." **(Quran 33:58)**

Indecent Talk

"Those who love (to see) scandal published broadcast among the Believers will have a grievous Penalty in this life and in the Hereafter: Allah knows and you know not." **(Quran 24:19)**

"The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of Judgment is the man who goes to his wife and she comes to him, and then he divulges her secret." **(Muslim)**

"A believer does not taunt, curse, abuse or talk indecently." **(Tirmidhi)**

Carrying Tales (to create mischief)

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"Should I inform you that slandering, that is in fact a tale-carrying which creates dissension amongst people." **(Muslim)**

"A person who is addicted to telling tales will not enter Paradise." **(Bukhari)**

Two Faced

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"One of the most evil of people is the two-faced person who shows one face to these people and another face to those people." **(Muwatta)**

"He who is two-faced in this world will have two tongues of fire on the Day of Resurrection." **(Abu Dawood)**

This is because the fire emitted from his mouth used to reduce the relationships between people to ashes.

False Praise

The Prophet (SAW) heard a man praising another man excessively in front of the Prophet (SAW) who said to him, *"Woe to you, you have cut off your companion's neck, you have cut off your companion's neck,"* repeating it several times and then added, *"Whoever amongst you has to praise his brother should say, 'I think that he is so and so, and Allah knows exactly the truth, and I do not confirm anybody's good conduct before Allah, but I think him so and so,' if he really knows what he says about him."* **(Bukhari)**

He meant that excessive praise will make a person get puffed up with pride and this vanity will become the cause of his destruction. Such excessive praise is forbidden. There is no harm in praising someone to encourage them or commend them for their good performance, provided it is done in moderation as the Prophet himself praised people who deserved to be praised.

The Prophet (SAW) also said:

"When a reprobate is praised the Lord, Most High is angry, and the Throne shakes on account of it." **(Tirmidhi)**

The person who flouts Allah's commands is not deserving of respect or praise. If such a person is held in high esteem, it is proof that the people around him have either no love left for their religion, Allah and His Prophet or that they have become too weak to stand up for the truth.

Cursing

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"When you hear a man say, 'The people are ruined,' he himself is the most ruined of them all.'" **(Muwatta)**

"Do not invoke Allah's curse, Allah's anger, or Hell." **(Abu Dawood)**

"When a man curses anything the curse goes up to heaven and the gates of heaven are locked against it. Then it comes down to the earth and its gates are locked against it. It then goes right and left, and if it finds no place of entrance it returns to the thing which was cursed and if it deserves what was said (it enters it); otherwise it returns to the one who uttered it." **(Abu Dawood)**

Similarly, things like making fun of someone, bragging and boasting etc. for which the tongue is the medium, are also disliked in our religion. Allah and His Prophet (SAW) have expressed their strict disapproval for such behaviour and so one should try one's best to refrain from them.

Importance of Silence

By not controlling the tongue, one gets involved in all kinds of sins. It is for this reason that along with commanding us to control our tongue, the Prophet (SAW) emphasized the importance of silence. He said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last day should talk what is good or keep quiet." **(Bukhari)**

LASTLY

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"No (Muslim) man will desert a man who is a Muslim in a place where his respect may be violated and his honour aspersed without Allah deserting him in a place here he wishes His help; and no (Muslim) man who will help a Muslim in a place where his honour may be aspersed and his respect violated without Allah helping him in a place where he wishes his help." **(Abu Dawood)**

"The best companion in Allah's estimation is the one who is best to his companion, and the best neighbour in Allah's estimation is the one who is best to his neighbour." **(Tirmidhi)**

Only a person who is oblivious to his final outcome can adopt this practice of finding fault with others.

Despite knowing all this, we do make many mistakes. This is because of weakness in our determination and resolve to make our Hereafter a life of eternal peace, security, comfort and joy for ourselves. Taking advantage of this weakness, our tongue succeeds in defeating us. The way to control our tongue is not only by eliminating our doubts in the life after death, Paradise and Hell but also by thinking about them often. In this way, they will become imprinted on our hearts and mind and we will be able to "see" them clearly through the eye of our perception. There are so

many vivid descriptions of Paradise and Hell given in the Quran and the ahadith that if a person reads them again and again, over time, a graphic picture of Paradise and Hell will develop in his mind. So it is important to take a few minutes from our busy daily routine and make it a practice to sit and reflect on these realities. Life passes away in the twinkling of an eye and the moment will soon come when, despite their devotion to us, our loved ones will shroud us in white and bury us under a mound of earth. The grave is the place where we will have to stay for a long time and about which the Prophet (SAW) has said:

"The grave is one of the gardens of Paradise, or one of the pits of Hell." **(Tirmidhi)**

Then we will be resurrected and driven to the Plain of Hashr where our Scroll of Deeds will be given to us in our hands. Only Allah knows what will be written in them … backbiting, tale-telling, slander, lies, harsh speech, deception, evil deeds, dishonesty, heedlessness to religion and disobedience to Allah and His Prophet … Or will it be honesty, love and loyalty to religion, piety, virtuous behavior, safeguarding the tongue, dutifulness, taqwa (Allah-consciousness), serving Islam and love of Allah and His Prophet? ... Then the accountability will begin after which there will be either a wonderful place of peace, pleasures and delights about which we have been told by the Prophet (SAW): *"The eye has not seen, the ear has not heard and no human heart has ever perceived them."* **(Muslim)**

… or will a person be of those cast into that humiliating and torturous place about which it is said in the Quran:

"Therein shall he neither die nor live." **(Quran 20;74)**

Visualising all this for just a few minutes, but on a daily basis, will, In Sha Allah, strengthen our belief and faith in the Hereafter to such an extent that in addition to controlling our tongue, we will be able to face up to all the other tests of life with steadfastness.

As a first step, we should start by safeguarding ourselves from the treacheries of the tongue. Then, inspired by Allah, we should learn about our religion and use the power of our speech to propagate its teachings including the recitation of the Quran and the understanding of its meanings. We should also try to keep our tongue constantly busy with the remembrance of Allah.

May Allah bestow upon us the ability to act according to His commands. Ameen

PKR. 4/- Each

PYAME DOST House # ZB-1037/C, Sector 3,
Khayaban -e- Sir Syed, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
Website: www.pyamedost.org
E-mail: pyamedost@hotmail.com